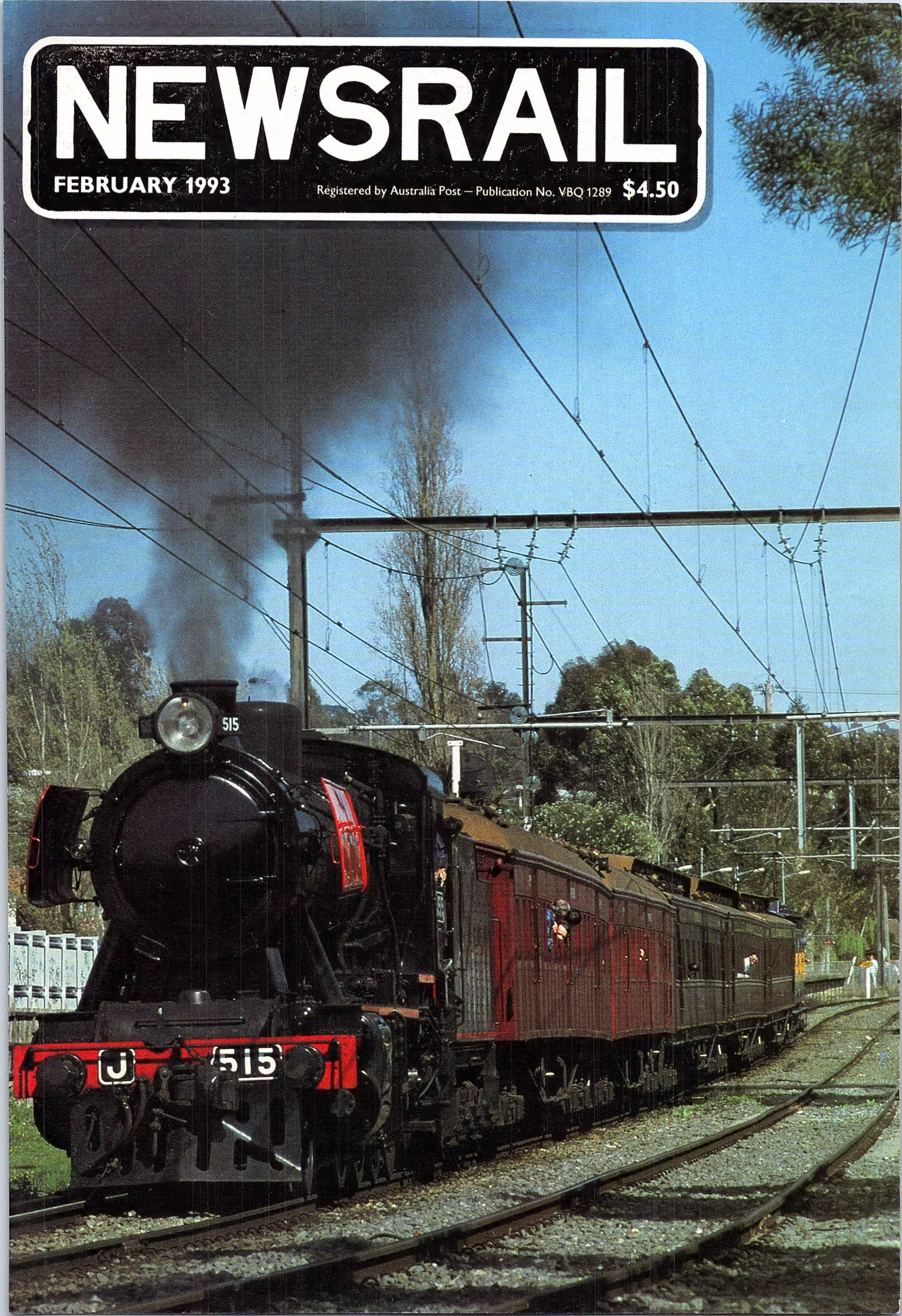


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FOR ALL WHO ARE INTERESTED IN RAILWAYS

NEWSRAIL

ESTABLISHED 1973

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Success against major odds

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TOURISM

Is there a place in tourism for our railway heritage?

REGULAR FEATURES

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FRONT COVER: J515 lifts its load out of Mooroolbark as it heads for Lilydale at 10 03 on
Sat.3.10.92 during the Time Travellers' Weekend. (See story page 46.) Bryce Leydon

OPPOSITE: P18 drops down into Bacchus Marsh on the 17 22 down pass ex. Spencer
Street. 18 18, Tues.10.11.92 Ian Woollett

BACK COVER:

Above: As reported on page 36, the government is going on a rail slashing spree. Our back
cover depicts two services that are proposed to turn into buses. B76 (now in store) leads
the 09 52 Frankston to Stony Point service, climbing up towards Leawarra on Sun.12.7.92.
Normally rostered for two MTH cars, this shuttle service is built up to three cars during
school holidays Doug Knowles

Below: The early morning sun catches P13 as it climbs upgrade from Kardella towards
Korumburra with the 07 05 up Leongatha to Spencer Street pass. on Sat.2.1.93 Bryce Leydon

GENERAL NEWS

A monthly round-up of Victorian railway news and events

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

ANNIVERSARIES

1st, 1878: Opening of Geelong Racecourse Junction - Geelong Racecourse (115)
1943: Closure of Robinvale - Koorakee (50)
1st, 1968: Closure of Waubra Junction - Waubra (25)
3rd, 1973: Richmond Flyover commissioned (20)
4th, 1973: Seymour Loco depot destroyed by floods (20)
19th, 1898: Closure of Dunkeld - Penshurst (95)
20th, 1973: Jolimont Sub-station ceased operation (20)

DIARY

Thurs. 25th: Monthly Meeting, AMP Theatre
Sat. 27th: ARHS Derm Tour to Waurin Ponds and Fyansford

MARCH

ANNIVERSARIES

1st, 1878: Opening of Bunyip - Moe (115)
3rd, 1953: First L class 2,400 hp main line electric loco (L1150 - R G Wisbart) in service (40)
5th, 1963: Official opening of CTC signalling system on s.g. to Wodonga (30)
8th, 1893: Opening of Wycheproof - Sea Lake (100)
14th, 1928: First of four 'S' class Pacific 4-6-2 locos in service (65)
15th, 1948: First diesel railcar in service (45)
16th, 1928: Opening of Murrabit - Stoney Crossing (65)
20th, 1873: Opening of Longwood - Violet Town (120)
28th, 1893: Opening of Donald - Birchip (100)

DIARY

Fri. 5th - Mon. 8th: Annual AMRA Model Railway Exhibition, Camberwell Centre
Wed. 24th: Monthly Meeting, AMP Theatre

APRIL

ANNIVERSARIES

8th, 1963: Australia's first bogie exchange centre opened at Dynon (30)
15th, 1923: Heidelberg - Eltham electrified (70)
15th, 1923: Electrification of original metro railway network completed (70)
21st, 1973: Commencement of Melbourne Steam Festival (NSW locos 3801 and 3820 visited) (20)

DIARY

Thurs. 22nd: Monthly Meeting, AMP Theatre

MAY

1883: First Railmotor Car (Rowan Steam Car) in service (110)
7th, 1973: Last Chairman of Commissioners (G F Brown) retired (20)
8th, 1888: Opening of Royal Park - Clifton Hill (105)
8th, 1888: Opening of Moe - Thorpdale (105)
8th, 1888: Opening of Sale - Bairnsdale (105)

DIARY

Thurs. 27th: Monthly Meeting, AMP Theatre

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SALE AND LEASE-BACK INFORMATION

Information on who actually owns Victoria's trams, trains and buses, obtained by the then Shadow Minister for Public Transport, Mr A Brown, was released on Mon.28.9.

In simple terms, major items of equipment were sold to financiers (lessor) for a set price and then leased back for pre-arranged regular payments. At the expiration of the lease period, the balance (residue), was immediately payable to the lessor to enable the equipment to be returned to PTC ownership. Should funds not be available to pay out the residue, a new lease arrangement could be negotiated.

Details are set out hereunder:

- August 1982: 22 x Z3 trams sold for \$10.23 million. This lease was terminated in June 1988 for an estimated cost of \$16 million.
- 17 August 1982: 30 x Z3 trams sold for \$13.95 million with a lease-back arrangement over 10 years.
Lease payments: \$21 872 149.
Residue: \$4.185 million.
Cost of lease: \$12 107 149.
- 22 September 1982: 114 railway passenger carriages sold for \$65.95 million with a lease-back arrangement over 15 years.
Est. total lease payments: \$121 million.
Residue: \$6.595 million.
Est. cost of lease: \$61.6 million.
- 23 November 1982: 16 x Z3 trams sold for \$7.440 million with a lease-back arrangement over 10 years.
Lease payments: \$11 606 430.
Residue: \$2.232 million.
Cost of lease: \$6 398 430.
- 18 May 1983: 168 suburban railway carriages sold for \$50 million with a lease-back arrangement over 15 years.
Est. lease payments: \$122 190 900.
Residue: \$7.5 million.
Est. cost of lease: \$79 690 900.
- 29 June 1983: 50 x Z1 trams sold for \$20 million with a lease-back arrangement over 10 years.
Est. lease payments: \$30 500 236.
Residue: \$6 million.
Est. cost of lease: \$16 500 236.
- 30 June 1983: 24 x Z3 trams, 13 x A1 trams and Auto Vehicle Monitoring System sold for \$30.5 million with

a lease-back arrangement over 13 years.

Est. lease payments: \$54 032 432.

Residual: \$7 050 000.

Est. cost of lease: \$30 582 432.

- 6 January 1984: 74 new Comeng trains sold for \$50 million with a lease-back arrangement over 15 years.

Est. lease payments: \$96 386 942.

Residual: \$1.

Est. cost of lease: \$46 386 941.

- 8 June 1984: 61 train trailers, 122 train motors and 64 x Z trams sold for \$56 201 600 with a lease-back arrangement over 15 years.

Est. lease payments: \$107 million.

Residual: \$5 620 160.

Est. cost of lease: \$56 418 560.

- 12 June 1984: 1383 rail wagons sold for \$70 665 785 with a lease-back arrangement over 12 years.

Est. lease payments: \$123 million.

Residual: \$3 533 289.

Est. cost of lease: \$58 867 504.

- 29 June 1990: 33 G class, 25 N class locomotives and 50 Comeng trains sold for \$350 670 009 with a lease-back arrangement over 7 years.

Est. lease payments: \$385 million.

Residual: \$168 816 107.

Est. cost of lease: \$203 146 098.

- 29 December 1989, 11 April 1990, 27 June 1990: 60 Man buses and 50 lightrail vehicles sold for \$97 200 897 with a lease-back arrangement over 4 years for the buses and 6 years for the lightrail vehicles.

Est. lease costs: 101 million.

Residual: \$55 545 532.

Est. cost of lease: \$59 344 635.

GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT REFORM

In a statement released on Wed.6.1 the Minister for Public Transport, Mr A Brown, made sweeping changes to the State's public transport system. Relevant portions of the Minister's news release are set out hereunder:

- Substantial savings will be made and public transport will be safer with the introduction of bus services on the following train routes after 20 00 each day:

- Footscray to St Albans
- North Melbourne to Broadmeadows
- Clifton Hill to Epping
- Burnley to Glen Waverley

GENERAL NEWS



With the NRC deciding on the Cressy option to Adelaide for their standard gauge route, the two severe curves at Cressy and Maroona on the otherwise flat and straight railway will hopefully be re-aligned. C501-C507-S317 round the 50 km/h curve into Cressy on No.9169 Melbourne - Adelaide goods at 14 42, Sat.12.12.92 Gavin McLaughlan

- Ringwood to Lilydale and Belgrave
- Caulfield to Dandenong and Pakenham
- Moorabbin to Frankston
- South Yarra to Sandringham.
- To facilitate the reform programme, two train services, Newport to Williamstown and North Melbourne to Upfield, will be withdrawn and existing public transport will be supplemented. The date of the withdrawal is yet to be announced.
- The Camberwell to Alamein rail line will operate only during peak times with buses to replace trains in off-peak periods.
- Due to excessive losses, the Government will no longer operate passenger rail services on some country lines.

Tenders will be invited from the private sector and local communities to operate passenger services by either bus or trains on the following routes:

- South Geelong to Warrnambool
- Ballarat to Dimboola
- Melbourne to Mildura
- Bendigo to Swan Hill
- Seymour to Cobram
- Seymour to Wodonga and Albury
- Traralgon to Bairnsdale
- Dandenong to Leongatha
- Frankston to Stony Point.

■ Freight services would be cut to rationalise losses and interstate freight would be progressively handed over to the NRC. This will result in about one-third of the freight division's workforce being retrenched.

- Epping will take over the operations of the Jolimont workshop.
- Outdated work practices would be reformed.
- Close all country rollingstock maintenance depots except Geelong and Portland.

The expected job losses will come in three waves, 3400 workers will go by 30 June, 3300 by June 1994 and a further 1800 by December 1995.

In regard to the option of local communities operating passenger train services the Minister said 'No passenger trains will be withdrawn without local authorities being given the option of running the system themselves. Local Government has a greater understanding of community needs and I am sure they will make decisions in the best interests of their communities.'

'If regional communities want their passenger rail services to continue, the government is prepared to make available rollingstock and other equipment under favourable terms to local authorities and other suitable bodies.'

'I will look sympathetically on any reasonable tenders that local authori-

ties submit for operation of rail lines within the areas of their responsibility. This is an important reform that ensures the needs of Victorian country areas are not neglected.'

It was reported that the tender process for the nine country passenger rail services was to start before 30 June 1993.

NEWSRAIL seeks and would welcome letters from interested readers who would be prepared to comment on the above reform in a constructive and hopefully non-emotional manner.

FARE CHEATS

The PTC is collecting more than \$100 000 a week in fines from fare cheats. The revamped Revenue Protection Unit, boosted to 150 members three weeks ago by the re-deployment of 84 ex-Transit Patrol Officers, is now booking more than 1000 commuters a week, an increase of 400.

The PTC's projected revenue collection by the unit for the year ending mid-1993 is more than \$5 million.

Fare evasion is rife, particularly on the rail system, where on any given line, about 80% of stations are unmanned by PTC staff for most of the day.

PTC statistics show that ticket sales at stations attended by the Revenue Protection Officers increased markedly on days following a blitz on the line or station.

BIRCHIP

— by Rail —

A celebration of the first one hundred years

The frustration experienced by the Birchip community in north-western Victoria, brought about by the many delays in authoritarian decision making which prevented it from getting its railway, was vented through the editorial columns of the *Birchip Advertiser* in the 29 January 1892 issue, when it was stated 'we are so isolated from a railway that we have to drag our produce immense distances over dusty roads in summer and our stores through a succession of quagmires in winter. Our farmers and tradespeople must, indeed, have an unusual leaven of that invaluable quality . . . called 'cussedness' to enable them to go in and win in face of these adverse circumstances'.

Ten years previously the rail line from St Arnaud had advanced to Donald, with the railheads on the two adjacent tracks being at Wycheproof from 1883 and Warracknabeal from 1886, but with long delay in finalising decision on how Birchip was to be serviced. However, the long period of uncertainty was soon to come to an end. Fourteen months later, on 28 March 1893, a line from Donald was completed and officially opened for traffic. The great day had come. Eleven years of waiting were over; Birchip had got its railway.

THE MALLEE THAT WAS

Life for the pioneers of the north-western part of Victoria, known as the Mallee, had always been harsh. They toiled in an isolated area of the state, lacking the barest amenities of life, to carve out a basic existence from the soil. Their crops were ravaged by drought and attack by rabbits and other vermin and they generally lacked a reliable supply of water. Practically and psychologically the presence of a railway and availability of rail services would diminish their sense of isolation and improve the quality of their lives.

During the 1860s and 1870s, the main trunk rail lines had been constructed under contract as a matter of need and with little concern for cost. This resulted in exhaustion of funds for railwork, with extension of the network having to be undertaken at significantly lower cost to the state. A proposal was put forward for the construction of lower cost 'light lines' which, however, would limit heavy loads and speeds achievable on trunk lines. In the case of lines to the Mallee, heated debate ensued on the concept of cheap construction, but the matter dragged on for such a long period that ultimately it became accepted that any line was better than none at all.

By the time that Donald became a railhead in 1882 and Wycheproof the railhead on the adjacent eastern track the following year, considerable development had taken place to the north and west of these towns. The settlement in the Witchipool district, which later became known as Litchfield, was

While railway activity has markedly declined and the puffing and panting of steam locomotives has long been replaced by the throb of the diesel-electric, Birchip still has strong links with its railway and its past.

Sid Brown

progressing rapidly. Settlement had commenced at Massey and Watchem, and Corack north-east of Lake Buloke was already an identifiable community with a store, shop, hotel and blacksmith's shop. Cobb and Co included Corack on its mail and passenger service route.

Settlement had been taking place on the Watchem and Morton Plains pastoral run since 1873 and a township was established at Watchem in 1875.

Morton Plains had boasted a store, hotel and post office since 1866. The hotel was an important stopping place for Cobb and Co coaches and the focal point for meetings, social gatherings and commercial activities. It was the meeting place for many of the discussions leading to the extension of the railway from Donald. The population in the rural area and townships was growing rapidly.

NORTHWARDS TO WIRMBIRCHIP

North of Morton Plains was the district known as Wirmbirchip. In 1882 a store was established by the Glowrey Brothers at a five-way crossroads some seven miles (twelve kilometres) from Morton Plains, which ultimately became the site of the town of Wirmbirchip. By 1887 a hotel was being operated by a Mrs Blencowe and J E Cutts had opened a store. That same year a government survey was carried out to provide for township expansion. Sales of blocks followed and the township population grew rapidly. By 1890 there were fourteen shops and 250 town residents.

During all of this time, farms were being set up under various government land acts, the most important of which for this locality being the *Mallee Pastoral Lease Act 1883*. This defined 'The Mallee' and laid down regulations for its development using the Wild Dog Fence erected in 1885 as a base for the proclamation of boundaries and what was to take place within the Mallee and fringe Mallee areas. However, it was not until the provisions of the 1883 Act were revised that grain production was able to develop as a major industry. This took place in the mid 1890s.

Until 1895 all this area had been part of the Shire of St Arnaud. In that year a new shire was created which, by the action of the first shire council, was given the shorter name Shire of Birchip, rather than Wirmbirchip. Likewise, the town was given the shorter title.

DECISION AT LAST

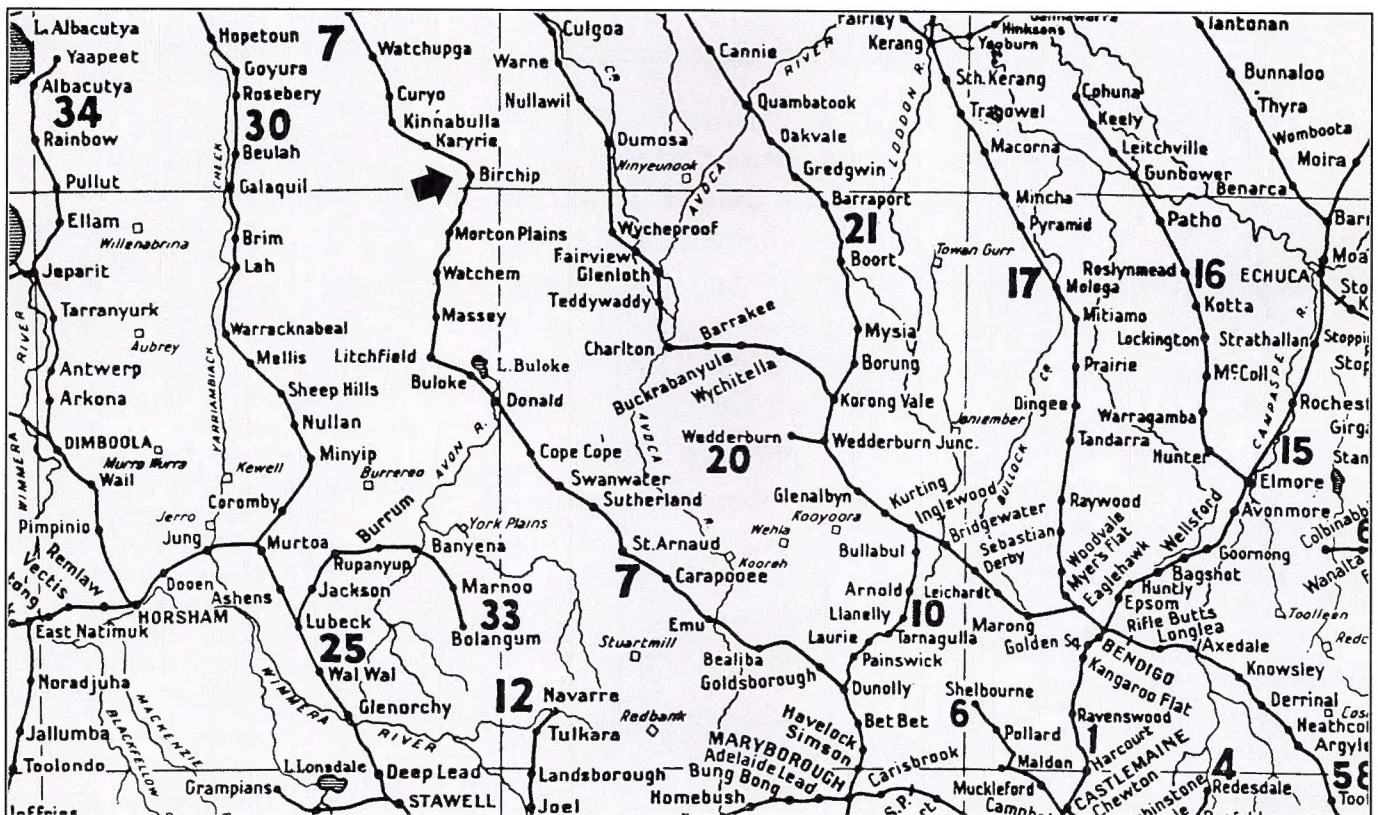
On 10 November 1892, the Railway Standing Committee recommended the construction of six lines, with the Donald to Wirmbirchip line occupying first position when the subsequent Railway Bill was presented in parliament. However, when the bill reached the final debate stage in December,

because of government financial constraints, two conditions were applied to the construction of country lines. One which had far reaching effects in the case of the Donald extension was that previous to the construction of any line all the land required had to be provided to the railways free of cost and 'without compensation for severance or any other impediment'. Secondly, local rates would be charged by the Victorian Railways to cover the cost of operating the new lines and the payment of interest on construction costs. At that time, the interest rate was four per cent.

The Watchem, Morton Plains and (by then) Wirmbirchip Railway League responded quickly to the demand that the land for the thirty two mile (fifty two kilometre) line be provided free of cost. Lists were prepared and placed in stores at Wirmbirchip, Watchem and Witchipool seeking signatures

and the remainder from Melbourne. During his visit, Mr Wheeler also viewed three sites suggested for the station. He favoured the most central location in Watson's paddock. The recommendation was not acceptable to all of the town residents, particularly those whose land was being considered as an alternative. At one time the line was being planned to terminate north of the Pump Hut Reserve, approximately half a mile (one kilometre) north of the present Birchip station. The minister made it quite clear that, irrespective of site, if all of the land was not given to the railways department free of cost, he would terminate the line, for the present, at some distance south of the town.

In August 1892 tenders were called for the initial supply of 3,000 posts for fencing the railway, in spite of the Railway Standing Committee originally recommending that the line



of persons prepared to contribute a sum of not less than £1 to a fund for the purchase of the necessary land.

The attention of shire councillors was drawn to the savings that could be made if surveyed three chain roads were used for both road and rail. The idea was accepted and in due course thirteen miles (twenty two kilometres) of the track from Donald was constructed on the road. An example can be seen south of the town of Birchip.

SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

The *Birchip Advertiser* of 20 May 1892 noted with satisfaction that 'the navvies engaged in the formation of the earthworks were now only six miles (ten kilometres) from Wirmbirchip'. It also recorded that tenders had been called for the bridge construction. A week later the earthworks had been completed up to three and a half miles (six kilometres) from the town and were expected to be finished by 17 June.

At that time a parliamentary delegation, including the new Minister for Railways, Mr J H Wheeler, inspected the extension. The minister was sufficiently satisfied with developments that he gave direction to proceed to the conclusion of the project in order that the line would be ready for the coming harvest. The line laying materials, rails, sleepers and ballast were ordered, the latter two items to come from Dunolly

and be unfenced in the interest of reducing costs. Tenders were also called for ballasting the line and for a 3,000 cubic yard dam at Morton Plains.

TRACK LAYING UNDERWAY

By mid-November 1892 rails had been laid as far as Watchem, a distance of twenty miles (thirty three kilometres) from Donald, but the wrangle over the Wirmbirchip station location still persisted. At this stage, preference was divided between the McClelland and Watson land. The issue of the *Birchip Advertiser* of 16 December 1892 reported that Minister Wheeler had advised a further deputation seeking proclamation of Watson's paddock as the location that he did not wish to embarrass the guarantors or do anything harsh and arbitrary in the matter, but would send an officer within a few days with full power to make arrangements and decide the site of the station.

The matter was fully resolved when Mr Kernot, the engineer in charge of construction, visited Wirmbirchip on 21 December and informed the townspeople that Watson's land had been selected as the location of the station. He also produced plans for grain storage sites which would be let by tender 'very soon'. The station 'will be directly opposite Rundle Street, while the principle goods traffic will be along

Church Street'. The newspaper reported that this advice was received with much rejoicing. The burial of the hatchet was performed with due ceremony by the parties who contended for the rival station sites. The line was expected to be completed in six weeks by early February 1893.

COMPLETION OF CONSTRUCTION

The 17 February 1893 issue of the local paper carried the story of the official completion of the line. 'The ceremony of driving the "golden dog" in connection with the laying of the last rail on the Birchip line was performed by Mr Lockwood on Friday last (10 February) amidst general rejoicing. The spike, carefully prepared for the occasion, was nicely gilded over so as to represent a veritable "golden dog". It was given to Mr Telford for presentation to Mr Lockwood. The "dog" having been placed in position, the chief celebrant with erring aim brought it down pretty adjacent to the spike, but without any apparent effect. The second and third attempts were much more successful and the bruised head of the "dog" sank into the rail and sleeper.' The Inspector of Works, Mr Stewart, declared it 'well and truly driven'. Thus concluded the ceremony.

Cost of the extension was £69,142 (\$138 284) with an average cost of £2,127 (\$4254) per mile. The line ranges from 394 to 330 feet (120 to 100.5 metres) above sea level, with the steepest grade 1:100.

Owing to the light and economical character of the works, the low rate for labour and materials due to the existing depression, the land being handed over to the department free of cost and the works being carried out under the new system of small contracts, the line was constructed at a cost well below that of railways previously built in the colony.

READY FOR WORK

Although platforms were not initially available at stations and siding accommodation was minimal, the department and the people were anxious to get trains running even before the track was officially opened.

The five intermediate stations between Donald and Wirmbirchip were named:

Buloke — after the nearby lake — situated 187 miles (310 km) from Melbourne at an elevation of 380 feet (115.8 m) above sea level.

Litchfield — after one of the original settlers — situated 192 miles (320 km) from Melbourne — altitude 383 feet (116.7 m).

Massey — after an early settler — situated 197 miles (330 km) from Melbourne — altitude 373 feet (113.6 m).

Watchem — derived from an aboriginal word for a native plant that grew profusely in the area — situated 202 miles (340 km) from Melbourne — altitude 383 feet (116.7 m).

Morton Plains — after a local pastoral run — situated 207 miles (345 km) from Melbourne — 355 feet (108.2 m). The pastoral run derived its name from William Lockart Morton, one of the two joint first licence holders of the sheep squatting run in that district. The licence was issued in 1847.

Initially, stationmasters were appointed to Wirmbirchip and Watchem only. Mr M Sullivan was the first stationmaster at the former location and on site in time to issue thirty passenger tickets for the first official passenger train to depart Wirmbirchip on 28 March 1893, the day that the line was formally opened for traffic. However, this was actually the

second passenger train to leave Wirmbirchip, as eleven days earlier on St Patrick's Day, 17 March, a special two carriage train took patrons to the St Patrick's Day sports at Donald. It departed Wirmbirchip at 09 20 and was scheduled to arrive at Donald at 11 05, returning at 22 25 that night. Tickets cost 4s 4d return with no concession allowed for passengers joining the train at intermediate stations.

PASSENGER ROLLINGSTOCK

It was reported that carriages put into service on the Mallee lines were converted American carriages of such design that the guard was 'enabled to have a thorough surveillance' and sell tickets on the train. Each carriage was divided, half into first class and half into second class. In 1874, American saloon carriages with bogies, taking sixty first class passengers or sixty four second class passengers, had been introduced onto Victorian rail. These brought a luxury to rail travel previously

unknown. It is probable that some of these had later been converted into 'Mallee cars'.

The class of locomotive employed on early passenger services is not known with certainty, but 4-6-0 American style W or S class steam engines were being used on lightly constructed lines about that time. Some of these were built by Baldwin Locomotive Works in Philadelphia, Penn., USA between 1879 and 1883, while others were built at the Phoenix Foundry at Ballarat.

However, the first train to arrive at Wirmbirchip was a work train carrying sleepers drawn by an 0-6-0 goods

type 0 Class engine. It was one of forty four, some of which were imported from England, while others were built locally at the Williamstown Railways Workshop and Phoenix Foundry at Ballarat. The last of the 0 Class was scrapped in 1922. When the first train arrived, it pulled up beside a stack of bagged grain awaiting rail transportation — a good omen for the immediate future.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

With the coming of rail services, a new era had opened up for the people of the district. In the first fifteen months of operation to 30 June 1894, revenue on the extension was £11,683 (\$23 366), expenditure of £4426 (\$8852) and a nett profit of £3417 (\$6834). The passenger traffic from Wirmbirchip generated £1004 (\$2008) and from Morton Plains £38 (\$76). By 1895/96 the number of passengers commencing outward journeys from Birchip (the name of the town and station being officially shortened in 1895) had increased to 2484 with, in addition, 273 from Morton Plains. The total number continued to rise annually to reach 3440 and 242 respectively by 1900/01. During this time legal action had been taken by Mrs Emma Blencowe against the line guarantors and the Board of Land and Works for compensation for illegal entry onto her property for the purpose of constructing a railway line. The matter was eventually settled in court.

For sixteen years, the 'platform' at Birchip station was raised earth with a travelled top which stood six inches above line level and necessitated the use of a step ladder to join or alight from trains. This was a risky operation even in good weather and resulted in injury to a number of luckless passengers.

The stationmaster had to wait until 1894 before he was provided with a 'residence'. Portable gatehouses were transported, one each from Ararat and Shelbourne and re-erected

Mr M Sullivan was the first stationmaster at the former location and on site in time to issue thirty passenger tickets for the first official passenger train to depart Wirmbirchip on 28 March 1893, the day that the line was formally opened for traffic.



Birchip railway station. The refreshment rooms were in use from 1923 until 1966 ARHS Archives

at Birchip to become the home of the town's second station-master, Mr Tom Cotter, and his family.

The Railway Commissioners were not allowed to forget Birchip in those early days thanks to persistent demands from the Progress Association for the provision of sheep and cattle trucking yards, an extended passenger platform raised to carriage level, improvements to the goods shed and platform, and erection of a crane. These were all granted in due course, but not without delays. In 1909 the platform construction was completed, but without the requested extension. By March 1911 a handsome brick station building was ready for occupation.

The station complex comprised 'an 8 ft x 15 ft (2.4 m x 4.5 m) booking hall and 5 ft (1.5 m) porches, ample public accommodation, waiting rooms and lavatories of the latest design'. The booking, parcels and telegraphic offices measured 23 ft x 24 ft (7 m x 7.3 m) and were included in the one room. Electric light powered by the newly established town supply lit the building. The townspeople and railway officers were loud in their praise of the station building and the numerous improved conveniences.

It was 1910 before Birchip was supplied with a turntable for reversing the engines. It was located on the north side of the sheep and cattle trucking yards. By this time, the line had been further extended towards Mildura by about 100 miles (153 km) as far as Hattah. Birchip did not retain its turntable for long, as it was removed in 1922.

FREIGHT OPERATIONS

A century ago, the lack of railway facilities was considered as impeding progress during the developmental years of the Mallee districts. An all-weather reliable freight service was needed to economically and speedily transport grain, legumes, sheep and cattle to markets and to bring in the superphosphate, farm machinery, tractors, water, petroleum fuel, lubricating oil and the many other essentials for life in harsh terrain.

For upwards of eight years, rail freight met the requirements of the Birchip area, but by the mid-1970s road transport, providing door to door delivery, had taken over, almost completely, the cartage of goods to Birchip, except where the law specifically prevented this.

Since 1990, only bulk commodities in truck lots are received and despatched by rail at Birchip, being generally confined to superphosphate, cereal grains, legumes and an occasional consignment of wool. In 1984/85, Birchip had become a twin Central Receival Point with Watchem for such crops as wheat, barley and peas, with most of the bulk tonnage being handled through Grain Elevators Board silos and facilities.

Parcels continued to be carried by passenger rail, but ceased when the station was de-manned in 1990, with V/Line now delivering such items by road from Donald direct to consignees.

The mail was carried by rail for many years and, at times during the 1940s, mail bags for places as far away as Rainbow were railed to Birchip for contract road delivery to their destinations. Beulah and Wycheproof also received mail via Birchip. Today, mail services to and from the area are handled by contract road haulage.

PASSENGER TRAFFIC

Rail passenger service to and from Birchip is now minimal, being limited to a 'stop if required' arrangement with the *Vineland* on its four night a week run to and from Mildura. Less than two hundred people a year avail themselves of this service. Passenger traffic was at its highest level in 1910/11 when 11,176 outward journeys were recorded. Travel time between Melbourne and Birchip has halved between 1893 and 1993 from approximately twelve hours to six, but with significantly fewer stops. The train in earlier times stopped at all stations along the way, picking up and disembarking passengers, and loading and unloading bags of mail, cans of cream, boxes of eggs, sheep and rabbit skins, parcels, groceries and a variety of other items.

The original rail route from Melbourne was via Castlemaine and Maryborough, with a change of trains at Castlemaine and sometimes also at Maryborough, whereas the current passenger route is via Ballarat and Maryborough. Passenger services to small stations on the Mildura line were officially discontinued in 1975, but for all practical purposes ceased in 1967.

After completion of the further extension from Birchip to Woomelang in 1899, passengers arriving from Melbourne



J6 stands at Birchip on a mixed train in 1903. Originally in service in 1860 as a passenger 2-2-2 type locomotive No.6, she was rebuilt in the 1870s as a 2-4-0 type loco. J6 was scrapped in 1916 ARHS Archives

and Donald changed trains at Birchip onto a 'mixed' train which departed on Monday, Wednesday and Friday for Woomelang at 18 40. Travel time between the intermediate stations was to Karyrie twenty five minutes, Kinnabulla fifteen minutes, Curyo fourteen minutes, and Watchupga twenty eight minutes. Provided that there was no shunting at the stops, Woomelang was reached at 20 30, the total journey of twenty six and a half miles (44 kilometres) occupying one hour and fifty minutes. The train returned on the following morning, leaving Woomelang at 09 05 and arriving at Birchip at 10 55.

Over the next thirty years, passenger traffic terminating at and passing through Birchip was at reasonable level, with records showing that Birchip was a busy station with trains stopping at mid-day and evening meal times, as well as early morning stopping times for the up and down Mildura trains. Then, with the increasing popularity and availability of the motor car, passenger numbers started to move into a decline.

THE SPECIALS

Special trains have been a feature on all Victorian lines, particularly in earlier days. The Birchip area was no exception.

Football specials were popular. The North-Central Football League ran a 'line competition during the 1920s and up to the beginning of World War 2. The league comprised teams from Woomelang, Birchip, Watchem, Donald and St Arnaud for most of the period. Initially the games were played on Wednesday afternoons, the half-holiday for those towns, with the special trains providing transport for players and supporters to the matches.

From 1904 until 1939, a highlight of the social and sporting year made possible by the provision of special trains was the annual excursion from the Birchip area to Mildura. A big dance, a monster tea party, football games, rifle shooting and bowls competitions provided enticement.

On 8 September 1893, the first Birchip Agricultural and Pastoral Show special ran from Donald and these specials became a tradition for the Birchip Show until 1933.

WATER TRAINS

In drought times, over a period of sixteen years, Birchip and district depended on water trains — the special trains that meant survival in the Mallee. As early as March 1896, the Railways Department was being requested to carry life-giving water to the north. During the 1902 drought, which was very severe, the water trains ran every day. The Birchip Water Trust constructed dams at all of the railway stations in the district. Hand pumps were erected on stands and farmers from miles around with their wagons carrying 400 gallon iron tanks would come to collect their water needs, for which they paid the Railways Department. The water was not of high purity and not intended for human consumption, but so scarce was the vital commodity that it was used for cooking and drinking when no other was available.

The last water train to serve Birchip and district was in 1912. After this time, an assured water supply became available upon completion of the Wimmera - Mallee channel system constructed by the government.

STOCK AND FARM SPECIALS

Sheep specials and, to a lesser extent, cattle specials were a familiar sight in Birchip in earlier times. Stock was carried to market or the freezing works and during drought periods transported out of the district for agistment to parts of the state where feed was still plentiful. Large stock companies often financed whole train loads of stock for sale to approved clients at the one location.

The year 1924 saw the introduction of Better Farming Trains, which travelled around rural Victoria demonstrating to farmers new techniques to increase farm productivity. The brightly yellow painted train comprised lecture carriages, crop and agricultural equipment displays, and wagons carrying top quality cattle, sheep, horses, pigs and poultry. Later, special carriages were added to meet the needs of farmers' wives. One carriage was devoted to mothercraft and child welfare, a second incorporated a kitchen with up-to-date

cooking equipment which permitted on-train demonstrations and the third was a public health display carriage. The lectures and displays attracted large crowds at every stop. Initially four to six trips were made each year with Birchip welcoming its visit, but with the onset of the depression in the late 1920s and early 1930s, this was reduced to one a year. The service was discontinued in 1936.

WIRTH'S CIRCUS

One special train that had particular attraction for children was the circus train that came to Birchip every second year. The entire Wirth's Circus travelled on the train, including the animals in their cages and the elephants in open wagons. The circus troupe and workmen lived on the train in special carriages. At Birchip, the 'big top' was erected in the station yard and became a magnet attracting all the townspeople. At the conclusion of the entertainment, the 'big top' was dismantled and with all the equipment, animals and staff, reloaded on the train ready for travel to the next show place.

THE RESO TRAIN

The Victorian National Resources Development Train (RESO) was well known around the state rail network including the Mallee. The RESO train was specially equipped to enable leaders of industry in the metropolitan area to travel around rural districts and become aware of the prospects and problems of various country regions. The idea was initiated by the Railway Commissioner, who provided a train with self-contained accommodation and catering facilities for up to seventy passengers. It was a first class hotel on wheels and permitted country trips to be made of several days duration. Members of parliament, journalists, bankers, merchants and manufacturers, who had some affiliation with rural production, made up the passenger list.

The first ever RESO tour on 28 August 1922 was to the Mildura and Swan Hill districts.

REFLECTIONS

One hundred years is a long time and much has happened in the Birchip district over that period. Rail has played an important role in the development of the area and the regions further north. While the Birchip rail yard no longer resounds to the puffing and panting of steam locomotives, and the sight of the hissing steam and belching smoke is unknown to many of the current population, availability of this type of

power in the past did contribute significantly to there being a present and a future for Birchip.

Never again is Birchip likely to see the despatch in a year of 671 sheep trucks, 125 cattle and 56 horse trucks, as was the case in 1920. Nor will there be occasions when truck loads of headers and farm machinery and containers of tractors are lined up under the crane awaiting unloading and local assembly. These times will not come again. However, the pulsating throb of high powered diesel-electric locomotives loitering at the head of long lines of bulk grain wagons waiting to move south, and the roar of *Fruit Flyers* and the *Vine-lander* sets dashing through the night, all beat out reassurance that *Birchip and Rail* are still intimately associated.

Across the world, perception by the public that for many tasks there are more efficient and effective ways than the use of rail, has brought about a diminution in the importance of rail transportation in many countries. Little wonder, then, that this has been reflected at Birchip where railway staff are no longer stationed. Formerly, the railways was a major employer of staff. Railway personnel played a significant role on all district committees and their children often provided the major numbers in local schools.

Following the demolition and removal of refreshment rooms and other station buildings, the station staff beautified the station surrounds with tree planting and lawn projects and maintained the garden over many years. In 1986, their efforts earned the prize for the best kept station in the western region.

Four years later in 1990, the station was de-manned and the office buildings leased to the Shire Council, whose staff keep the area neat and tidy. In September 1991, the buildings were sub-let to a local electrical business, the proprietors of which also care for the surroundings.

So it was with a sense of thanksgiving for the past, acceptance of the present and hope for the future, that the Birchip Railway Centenary Committee formed and decided that the centenary of the arrival of rail in the town was worthy of celebration. The contents of a 100 page book, *A Century of Rail - History of Rail Services - Birchip and District 1893-1993*, specially written by George Gould to commemorate the occasion, provide much of the rail and general history of the district. The compilation and publication of this historical information is an achievement appreciated by the Birchip community, past and present rail staff, and rail enthusiasts alike.

B64-T352-T393 pass through Birchip at 13 25 on No.155 down goods to Ouyen on a wet Fri.31.3.89 Graham Withers





The original building at 67 Spencer Street before the addition of the upper floors ARHS Archives

67 SPENCER STREET

An impressive and dignified structure regarded as embodying all that was best within the Victorian Railways.

Geoff Peterson

The former Victorian Railways Administration Building, 67 Spencer Street, was opened in 1893, 100 years ago, as one of the larger buildings in Melbourne reflecting the 'boom' conditions of the period and now stands empty and rejected which may be a sign of the current times.

The original Railway Offices were built by the Melbourne, Mt Alexander and Murray River Railway Company in 1854 and were located to the north of the existing building. Long after the purchase of the Company by the government of the day and the formation of the Victorian Railways the old offices were demolished when the Outward Parcels office was built in 1926.

Following a need by the then Commissioners to provide a central location for the various branch offices, plans for a new office complex were prepared under the direction of Mr Green, Chief Engineer of the Railways. The decision to erect the building coincides with the era of extravagance and optimism of the Railway Octopus Acts.

Mr James Moore, timber merchant of South Melbourne, signed the contract for the erection of the new railway offices in Spencer Street on 13 September 1888. The first Loan Act of 1887, allocated £25,000 (\$50,000) to commence building, with subsequent allocations being made available to complete and furnish the building at a total cost of £132,000 (\$264,000). The building was completed on 30 January 1893.

The original building was designed in the Renaissance-Italianate style, was an impressive structure and regarded as embodying all that was best in the architectural fashion of

the times. It comprised a basement and three floors which were expanded with the addition of upper floors in 1912 and 1922 incorporating a Neo-French style.

The building was originally to be constructed of bluestone but, due to the high cost, it was finally built in brickwork with the exterior finished

with stucco (cement render). A group of statues that graced the top of the building were removed when the additional floors were built and further sculptures on the exterior were removed in 1930 as they were breaking up and considered dangerous to the passing public.

The plan of the building forms a shallow 'U' opening away from the Spencer Street facade. The building has a frontage of 420 feet (approx 120 metres) with a centrally situated main entrance, flanked by secondary entrances at either end of the building. The entrances lead to a central corridor running the length of the building and into the wings. This provides access to each office as well as the lifts and stairs.

The main entrance provides access to the major internal feature of the building, the central staircase. The stairwell core is 50 ft x 60 ft (15.25 m x 18.28 m) and accommodates possibly the largest Victorian staircase in Melbourne. It is lit by three acid etched windows emblazoned with the 'VR' insignia.

The initial central flight of stairs at the landing splits into two symmetrical flights at right angles to provide access to the first floor 'Deputation Room', which later became the library. The staircase is flanked by cast iron balusters and a timber balustrade. This stairwell reflects the boom period and the architectural thinking of the day where the grand staircase

is the highlight and not tucked away behind a lift as is the current practice.

The principal offices were located at the top of the grand staircase on either side of the deputation room and comprise the board room and Commissioners' offices to the north and the office of the Minister of Railways to the south.

The building was placed so that it would not stand in the way of the proposed viaduct linking Spencer Street and Flinders Street stations.

The basement, on ground level with Flinders Street, was originally occupied by the telegraphic and printing sections and the cash strong rooms. The General Traffic Manager, the Accountant and their staff and Telegraph Engineer occupied the ground floor. The first floor accommodated the Secretary, the Engineer-in-Chief and their staff. The second floor was taken up by draftsmen and the plan room.

In 1925 the VR magazine reported 'The lack of space in the Head Office, due to the natural expansion of the service, has been a source of difficulty for some time past'. This has resulted in a number of changes taking place within the building.

The testing laboratory moved to Newport Workshops and the printing division to North Melbourne. The space made available saw the installation of the telephone exchange, train control and the photographic section.

The last major change was the closure of the central entrance in 1957 to make way in the basement for the central reservation bureau which gained more ceiling space with the removal of the giant steps inside the entrance.

The Ministry of Transport and the V/Line administration moved to the new Transport House, 589 Collins Street during the early 1985. The Victorian Government then sold the cavernous and decaying building as part of a rationalisation of its surplus public holdings.

67 Spencer Street was sold by tender in 1988 in the height of the property boom for \$5.2 million to Bowden Fraser Construction Pty Ltd who, in-conjunction with a Japanese partner, providing development finance, proposed to turn the former railways headquarters into a 'ritzy-style' luxury hotel of 217 rooms and a car park for 158 cars.

In 1989, the Japanese partner pulled out, and the property was re-tendered for sale but with the downturn in the development market coupled with the conditions of the contract made it commercially unacceptable to buyers.

Late in 1989, the Hellenic Business Forum contracted to buy the building for \$7.9 million with plans to use the building for a number of uses including cultural activities for the Greek community. The deal fell through as the Greek community were unable to raise the money.

The mortgage owner, Farrow Mortgage Services Pty Ltd, placed the building back on the market and auctioned it in September 1990. No acceptable bids were received and to date we believe no sale has been made.

The building is regarded as the finest example of the Italianate style in the Central Business District (despite the alterations) and its preservation is considered essential.

One hundred years later the grand old building, which would bring back many memories for those who worked or had to visit there, stands empty and forlorn. The external condition is poor, having not been cleaned for many years, if at all. The cement render is unsound in many areas and has been chipped off where it constitutes a danger to public safety, revealing the underlying brickwork.

The National Trust has placed the building on its register and commented:

- It is historically significant in the development of railways in this State, being built at a scale and in a manner befitting the importance of the Railway Department during its heyday.
- Its contribution to city streetscapes is important, for it dominates the south end of Spencer Street and is one of the largest High Victorian office buildings in the central area.

In this respect, it keeps company with the major public buildings in Spring Street and Treasury Place.

Unlike this public building, however, it is now in poor external condition and is in need of restoration. It may not be feasible to completely re-instate the lower levels of the east facade.

The major internal feature of the building has always been, and continues to be the grand stair case which forms an important element in our heritage of Victorian architecture.

A moment's pause for the plate to be exposed in the Telegraphic office at 67 Spencer Street, circa 1904 ARHS Archives



The TIME TRAVELLERS' WEEKEND

The Time Travellers' Weekend, held over the weekend of 3/4 October 1992, was initiated by Alan Coad, District Business Manager, Eastern Central Region, Public Transport Corporation, as a promotional activity to encourage the public back to rail transport by providing the opportunity to ride on both of past and present forms of rail transport.

It was also proposed to involve the community in different travel modes over the weekend including the offer of a number of specific package trips.

OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES

The planning for the weekend was well in hand when the Government decided to call the state election on Saturday 3 October. There were moves afoot within the PTC to cancel the weekend as it could be construed a political exercise with the number of marginal seats in the eastern suburbs. Fortunately organisation for the weekend continued even though the PTC provided virtually no support in the form of local advertising to attract people back to rail transport.

The operation for the weekend was carried out by volunteer staff, excluding the running of the trains. A call went out for volunteers within the PTC to act as conductors and collect the fares on the various trips and for volunteer drivers. The

Against major odds, the Time Travellers' Weekend proved to be success based on the response from the travelling public.

Geoff Peterson

response particularly from all levels in the Eastern Central region was outstanding. Unfortunately the AFULE has a regulation that forbids the use of volunteer staff to man trains, so their charges had to be included in the costing.

Special tour packages were arranged with both the Healesville Sanctuary, incorporating road coaches from Lilydale to Healesville, and the Puffing Billy Railway which coordinated one of its trips to Emerald Lake and return with a one and a half hour Museum tour at Menzies Creek.

SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

A number of community and sponsorship arrangements were made to include community support. These covered the setting up of market stalls at the local stations selling anything from food and drinks through to local crafts. Municipal brass bands and local rock and roll bands were busking at different times during the day at various localities.

DIVERSE ROLLINGSTOCK

The train operations involved a steam train, Tait train, Rail-motor and double deck train which were coordinated into the existing services.

The double-decker train passes by J515 at Camberwell prior to the first down journey for the J on Sat.3.10.92 Duane Cochrane





After 10CM failed the day before, T320 (and later T357 was also added) substituted on Sunday. T320 leads the empty cars from Ringwood storage sidings into a wet Camberwell to form the first trip to Belgrave on Sun.4.10.92 Gavin McLaughlan

The double deck train ran between Flinders Street and Box Hill on an hourly service stopping at Camberwell only. A special printed ticket was on sale on the train, but this did cause some problems as the public considered the double deck train to be a normal service and objected to the surcharge particularly with the lack of public announcements to that effect.

The running of the restored Tait set was coordinated from Box Hill with the double deck train on a two hourly service with trips to Belgrave on Saturday stopping at Mitcham, Ringwood, Boronia and Upper Ferntree Gully. On Sunday the set ran to Lilydale stopping at Mitcham and Ringwood.

The steam shuttle was operated in a push-pull mode with J515 leading on the down trips out of Camberwell. On Saturday the destination was Lilydale with stops at Mitcham and Ringwood, with the restored parcel coach 10CM leading the consist on the up trip back to Camberwell. On Sunday the push pull mode was from Camberwell to Belgrave stopping at Mitcham, Ringwood, Bayswater and Upper Ferntree Gully with J515 leading and on the up T357 and T320 leading the consist.

Intermingled with these operations were railmotor mystery trips operated by DERM RM58 out of Ringwood. The mystery trips were shuttles to Ferntree Gully and Mooroolbark on both Saturday and Sunday.

SLSPG INVOLVEMENT

Seymour Loco Steam Preservation Group provided the restored motive power and rollingstock for the weekend, which was stored at Ringwood storage sidings over the

weekend. This produced some interesting movements to and from Seymour.

On Friday 2 October 1992, the first consist departed Seymour at 1100 hours and ran direct to Ringwood arriving 1333 hours and comprised T357, T320 as motive power, 6127GY providing coal for J515 for the weekend, *Wando* sleeping car, *Carey* shower car for the back-up crews, ZD van, 4 car refurbished Tait train 381M, 230D, 208T, 317M and the recently restored Parcel Coach 10CM.

A second consist departed Seymour at 20 05 arriving Ringwood at 22 40 and comprised J515, 14BE, 16ABE, 5ABE, 42BPL, 29BCPL and DERM RM58.

The return trip on Sunday 4 October 1992 required J515 to run tender first ex Ringwood at 18 40 to Jolimont Workshops where it was turned and returned to Seymour light loco to arrive at 21 20. The balance of the rollingstock under the control of T357 and T320 departed Ringwood at 20 15 to arrive Seymour at 22 50.

SUNDAY PUBLIC SUPPORT

While Saturday was bright and sunny for the election the numbers were down for obvious reasons. Come Sunday with rain for most of the day, a successful day was achieved judged by the large number of the public who travelled. It proved that one can overcome obstacles when one puts one's mind to it.

It was a pity more effort was not put in by the Corporation when the staff were obviously keen to promote rail transport to the general public.



- Above: During the *Time Travellers' Weekend*, 4 car restored Tait train between Mitcham and Heatherdale on the 10 32 down Belgrave from Box Hill. 10 42, Sat.3.10.92
- Below: 10CM with J515 in the rear, leads the 12 24 up Lilydale to Camberwell between Ringwood East and Ringwood. 12 41, Sat.3.10.92 Both photos Ian Woollett





• Above: J515 heads the 09 22 down Lilydale special from Camberwell through Blackburn. 09 34,
• Sat.3.10.92 *Ian Woollett*
• Below: 58RM passes through Heathmont returning to Ringwood from Upper Ferntree Gully on
• a 'Mystery Trip'. 12 04, Sat.3.10.92. *Bryce Leydon*



— TOURISM —

The place of our railway heritage in an expanding industry

The impression also exists that Victoria's financial recovery will be greatly assisted by the earnings from tourism.

Tourists are interested in seeing a variety of things, not the least being those things which depict our heritage. Unlike other countries, which have centuries of tradition, the European heritage in Australia starts from fairly recent times.

Australia is unique in that its European settlement commenced not long before the world's first railway trials were undertaken in England. Initial development following bullock tracks was short-lived because railways were introduced so early in our history. Major trunk lines with radiating branch lines spearheaded settlement. Towns grew up around railway junctions and industries sprang into existence to provide for local and surrounding needs.

My thesis is that, as far as Victorian tourism is concerned, our railway heritage is of major importance. In recent years we have witnessed the wholesale destruction of the once-comprehensive Victorian railway network. Fortunately some of the network has been saved by the efforts of amateur enthusiasts. Several tourist railway societies are now in existence, most struggling to achieve their aims with the support of a comparatively few honorary workers. These people are working in their own time to build very worthwhile tourist attractions with minimal support from those who will eventually gain.

I am a member of the Castlemaine & Maldon Railway Preservation Society (CMRPS) and as it is the only preservation group with which I am familiar, I will use it as the example for my discussion.

CMRPS was formed in December 1976 by a small group which was appalled at the wholesale closure and dismantling of Victorian branch lines. It realised that the government

*Political and other leaders
are forever telling us that
tourism will become a major
income earner for Australia.*

R D McMullen

agency could not continue to maintain these lines, so it looked for a recently-closed line that could be restored, maintained and operated by volunteers. The sixteen-kilometre line joining the historic towns at Castlemaine

and Maldon appeared to be long enough for tourist interest and short enough to be manageable by volunteers. The Society was, after a period of time, granted control of the line under an Order in Council.

Maldon station, although classified by the National Trust, was vandalised and in a poor state. The station yard and line were overgrown. The earliest steps taken by the society were

the restoration of the station, still not complete, and the tidying-up of the yard. CMRPS acquired various items of rollingstock and commenced restoration of locomotive K160 and several carriages.

Just prior to Easter 1986, K160, several carriages and 1.2 kilometres of track were finally restored. On Easter Saturday 29 March 1986, Castlemaine & Maldon Railway (CMR) commenced operation. Very slow progress was made in track restoration until the Society received a \$152,000 Community Employment Program (CEP) grant in 1987 enabling it to increase the length of the restored track a further 2.8 kilometres with community employed labour to give a steam run of 4.4 kilometres by the end of 1987. Since then the track work has been slow, averaging 0.4 kilometre per year.

At the beginning of 1990 the 21st Construction Squadron of the Australian Army undertook the rebuilding of the 27 span, 123.4 metre long trestle bridge over the Muckleford Creek. The Squadron completed the bridge by the end of March 1990 thus removing a major obstacle to taking the train to Muckleford station. By 1 January 1992, 6 kilometres of track had been restored to running order,



**J549 simmers at Maldon in between shuttle trips
on Sun.27.9.92 John Dare**

bringing the temporary terminus to within sight of the bridge and approximately 2 kilometres from Muckleford station.

It is estimated that by the use of the Society's resources and its volunteer labour it will be four years before trains can run into Muckleford. Muckleford is important for two reasons. Firstly, it is the half-way mark to Castlemaine and secondly, the siding at Muckleford would allow the engine to run around the train and dispense with the present push-pull operation. A grant of \$65,000 would enable the Society to purchase sleepers, employ labour and complete the job in one year.

To show the increasing popularity of the line, passenger figures for 1990 and 1991 were 9,736 and 16,504 respectively. Indications are that the annual passenger figures for 1992 will be substantially greater than those for 1991. This demonstrates the significant tourism value of the line even in its present incomplete state. One can well imagine its popularity when, ultimately, trains travel from Maldon to Castlemaine. Seeing J549 hauling six loaded passenger cars up 1-in-40 grades during Easter was a sight to be seen and admired.

V/Line rationalisation has reduced Castlemaine to a single-platform station with automatic signalling. The Castlemaine yard and the island 2 and 3 platforms with the signal box became redundant. The Order in Council transferring the Maldon line to CMRPS has now been amended to include the island platform and the western side of the yard. Castlemaine will not only be the terminus of the Maldon branch line but also a railway junction museum. Over the years CMRPS has acquired a wide range of rollingstock. It possesses J549, an oil burner and coal-burning K160, both restored, although K160 is now being given a major overhaul after six years of work. In addition K157, E371 and Walker 7RM are awaiting restoration. The diesel-electric fleet consists of T333, T345 (owned by a member) and F212, all in working order.

While it cannot be denied that CMRPS received good treatment in the prices it has had to pay for the whole of its rollingstock, the sum involved, while making little difference to the Public Transport Corporation (PTC) debt, has been a substantial sum to a volunteer society depending on membership fees, donations and passenger fares for its income. The money could have gone towards the purchase of sleepers and other restoration. It is my belief that the government could and should assist tourism by authorising PTC to negotiate the transfer of future redundant equipment to tourist railways at no cost. As a further concession, surplus V/Line workshop machine tools should be open to negotiation for free transfer.

It is no doubt realised that operational tourist railways must keep their rollingstock in good mechanical order to retain their licences to operate. This in turn means that major maintenance work must be done on operational equipment as well as ongoing restoration work. CMRPS has acquired several items of machine tools, enabling it to carry out many tasks which would have been contracted out. As time goes on the society will require replacement parts to be manufactured. The commercial costs of such items would be prohibitive so in-house means of manufacture will need to be devised and the society become an employer of tradesmen.

NEWSRAIL August 1989, pp. 234-5 contained an article by me on the need to salvage locomotives, so-called preserved locomotives in parks around Victoria, to provide further operational locomotives and the source of spare parts. I also

raised the question of children suffering injury from going through rusted plates and the danger of asbestos lagging of the boilers. I understand that many of them are now fenced in to keep kids from playing on them. I feel their salvage for heritage's sake is more important than ever. Static displays are interesting but there is nothing more instructive and interesting than the operational real thing. A steam train in motion is an emotional sight for many people.

Although it will take time and lots of support to achieve the creation of a railway junction museum at Castlemaine incorporating the 16 kilometre operational branch line between two historic towns, the result will be a tremendous tourist attraction. With the restoration of the Castlemaine yard to include a turntable, engine shed, coal stage, etc., the links with organisations such as Steamrail seem boundless in

their possibilities. There is no public transport available between Castlemaine and Maldon at weekends. The train will provide that link and should give a boost to V/Line passenger traffic to Castlemaine.

All of our tourist railway societies are providing for the survival of our heritage and assisting the important industry of tourism but they cannot reach their goals through their own resources and need substantial outside assistance. Youth employment schemes could be put to very useful purposes on such projects as the restoration of the line across Muckleford bridge, together with the restoration of the Muckleford station and yard.

The PTC being responsible for the efficient operation of our railways through V/Line cannot be expected to have a great interest in preserving railway heritage. This task must fall to others who should expect that the PTC, while providing little in the way of active support, will do nothing which will frustrate the tourist railway societies in their pursuits. The societies should, however, expect and be given assistance by governments through appropriate departments and the various elements of the tourist industry.

There are those who would argue that railway enthusiasts are just grown up boys playing trains. No one would deny that it is an absorbing hobby to those involved. What is overlooked is the impact that live steam has on the average person. As the son of a railway man, I can bear witness to the hold the railways had on the old-time railway man and the strong feeling of brotherhood and respect for the railway system that existed. I am sure my father and his many colleagues that I knew would be distressed beyond belief if they could see their beloved railways now. The zeal that imbued those people is the same thing which is felt by today's enthusiasts.

I recall, when steam was in its prime, the obvious and emotional reaction of people waiting on outer-suburban platforms when a steam-hauled passenger express stormed through the station. I believe that the younger generation would feel the same way in seeing such a sight.

If the view is held in some quarters that tourist railways are big boys' playthings, then the holders of these views should realise all kinds of sport are receiving generous hand-outs. Those involved in the sport of railroading should not be backward in pressing their claims for support.

I realise that this article is preaching to the converted, but one can hope the message will filter through to those who can and should provide the material support needed to salvage, restore and operate our valuable railway heritage.

All of our tourist railway societies are providing for the survival of our heritage and assisting the important industry of tourism but they cannot reach their goals through their own resources and need substantial outside assistance.

OPERATIONS

An overview of recent sightings and observations

GENERAL

S CLASS: As reported in sightings from Ballarat, Stawell, Gheringhap and Adelaide, the venerable S class is back on the job. How long this will last is not known and it is requested readers submit sightings as this may well be their last appearance.

It should be noted the same plea was made in the November 1988 issue as it was then thought the loco's career was coming to an end. It didn't. Perhaps this plea will extend their life a bit further.

SOUTH WEST -

Geelong - Warrnambool

GHERINGHAP: Recorded traffic between the end of October and late December is set out hereunder. The scheduled time at Gheringhap is set in parentheses at the end of the train identification.

07 55 (8105) down Dimboola pass. (08 58): Hauled by a single N or A class loco with times through Gheringhap between 08 56 and 09 10.

21 10 (8110) (TuTh) up Mildura pass. (05 28): Hauled by a single N class loco with times through Gheringhap between 05 25 and 05 34.

17 11 (8133) down Dimboola pass. (18 11): Hauled by a single N class loco occasionally assisted by an X class. Times at Gheringhap between 18 09 and 18 31.

13 15 (8146) up Dimboola pass. (16 42): Motive power either a single A or N class loco with times through Gheringhap between 16 39 and 17 13.

18 45 (8148) (F) up Ballarat pass. (19 27): Hauled by either an A or N class loco. Runs close to time.

14 45 (9121) North Geelong - Maryborough empty grain (14 58): Generally hauled by two G class locos with between 16 and 40 wagons. Times at Gheringhap between 14 44 and 15 38.

04 30 (9122) Maryborough - North Geelong block grain (07 36): The return of 9121 which runs close to time.

17 15 (9123) North Geelong - Maryborough empty grain (17 28): Motive power varies between a

single and two G class locos with no particular pattern. Times between 17 06 and 18 32. On Mon.16.11 T374 assisted G511 with 27 wagons.

10 40 (9135) (Tu-F) North Geelong - Gheringhap goods (empty gypsum) (11 00): A train of between 5 and 8 wagons hauled by a single T class loco. Usually arrives early. On Wed.25.11 H1-H3-8 wagons formed the consist.

11 40 (9136) (Tu-F) Gheringhap - North Geelong goods (gypsum): The return of 9135. Usually departs early.

20 15 (9138) (TuTh) Cowangie - North Geelong block gypsum (21 35): Single G class loco with between 18 and 39 wagons. Times at Gheringhap between 20 21 and 21 39. On Thurs.5.11 consist was X33-X48-22 wagons.

12 50 (9139) (TuTh) Corio - Mildura block oil (13 25): G class loco hauled with between 12 and 27 wagons. Tends to run early.

17 40 (TuTh) 18 25 (MWF) (9141) Melbourne Yard - Mildura goods (1927) (20 09): G class loco hauled with the occasional X class as an assist. Load varies between 9 and 29 wagons with the norm about 20. Tends to be late.

9150 (AM3) Dry Creek - Dynon goods: Often diverted through Gheringhap with times too variable to form a pattern. Usually hauled by a double-headed combination of either C, G, BL or 700 class locos. Variations to the norm were:

Tues.17.11: BL30-963-39 wagons at 15 32.

Tues.24.11: BL28-963-44 wagons at 17 03.

Wed.9.12: BL34-934-50 wagons at 20 39.

Tues.15.12: BL32-S313-705-53 wagons at 16 52.

09 00 (9152) (WF) Mildura - Melbourne Yard goods (22 26): Generally hauled by two G class locos with consist of between 16 and 36 wagons. Tends to run early. On Wed.25.11 G541-G512-B61-29 wagons were sighted and on Fri.27.11 the consist was G521-Y108-21 wagons.

11 30 (9153) (WF) Corio - Dimboola block oil (12 07): Almost

exclusively hauled by a single X class loco. Runs reasonably close to time. On Wed.18.11 G535-G543-X46-42 wagons formed a departure from the norm.

14 00 (9154) (TuTh) Dimboola - Corio goods (00 15): The return of 9153. Usually runs about one hour early. On Thurs.12.11 703-963-13 wagons were recorded under this train number at 22 30.

09 30 (9169) (MA2) (M-Th) Dynon - Port Adelaide goods; 12 10 (Sa) Tottenham Yard - Dry Creek goods (13 57): A variety combinations of C, G, BL and 700 class locos with the occasional S and 930 class to make the train interesting. Usually triple-headed and tends to run a little early. Unusual combinations recorded:

Sat.14.11: C507-BL35-963-61 wagons at 14 25.

Wed.18.11: C502-BL30-963-58 wagons at 14 14.

Wed.25.11: G515-G537-BL28-963-C510-65 wagons at 14 11.

Thurs.3.12: C509-S301-S313-65 wagons at 14 09.

Mon.7.12: C503-931-934-49 wagons at 15 22.

Thurs.10.12: C509-BL31-934-64 wagons at 14 08.

Sat.12.12: C501-C507-S317-50 wagons at 13 44.

12 20 (9170) (AM2) Dry Creek - Melbourne Yard goods (06 00): Double or triple-headed with similar combinations to 9169. Usually about one hour late. On Mon.30.11 G529-S313-S301-33 wagons formed the consist.

20 15 (M) 20 35 (TuTh) (9174) Ballarat - Melbourne Yard goods (21 50): A variety of locomotives. Has a tendency to run early.

Wed.4.11: G533-X45-X54-8 wagons at 20 34.

Tues.24.11: C510-S307-18 wagons at 21 20.

Mon.7.12: N472-19 wagons at 21 42.

Tues.8.12: C507-X37 (freshly painted) -21 wagons at 21 29.

Thurs.10.12: X41-20 wagons at 21 29.

Thurs.17.12: G535-25 wagons at 21 46.

18 35 (9193) Tottenham Yard - Mt Gambier goods (21 31): Usually

OPERATIONS

hauled by a single G class loco. Did not run on several occasions and loading down to three wagons in one instance. Through Gheringhap close to time.

- During the period extra empty block grain trains numbered 9195, 9197 and 9199 ran. 9195 was through between 16 33 and 16 06, 9197 between 20 12 and 22 26 and 9199 between 15 56 and 18 37.
- On Thurs.19.11 T413 was included in the consist of the 03 45 North Geelong - Ballarat goods.

WEST — Ararat - Portland - Wolseley - Adelaide

ADELAIDE:

9143 (MA6) Melbourne Yard - Islington superfreighter:

- Fri.4.12: Single G class loco arrived with containers on the Adelaide Gaol loop at 07 10.
- Sat.5.12: BL35 through the Adelaide parklands at 07 10 with 18 container wagons, two more than the normal single loco load.

9145 (MA5) Dynon - Islington superfreighter:

- Sun.6.12: BL30-703-S307 arrived at Islington at 07 15.

9148 (AM7) Islington - Dynon superfreighter:

- Sat.5.12: BL33-S317 were rostered but left too early for confirmation.

Mon.7.12: BL30-705 were ready to leave when the BL developed ground relays. A faulty traction motor was isolated and the train departed well behind schedule.

9149 (MA3) Dynon - Dry Creek goods:

- Sun.6.12: C509-S301 arrived 08 00.
- Sun.13.12: X46-S307-BL31-931-45 wagons arrived Dry Creek at 08 35.
- Sun.20.12: C501-BL33-702-961-71 wagons arrived Dry Creek at 10 10. The train had to go into Dry Creek North yard because of its length and after splitting the consist the container section was pushed back into Dry Creek South.

9150 (AM3) Dry Creek - Dynon goods:

- Sat.5.12: BL31-701-702-GM42-42 wagons (2410 tonnes) departed 20 10.
- Sat.12.12: C506-C503 departed 15 late at 20 15.
- Sat.19.12: BL35-C509-BL30-706-702-BL27-62 wagons departed 20 15. Included in the consist was a string of grain hoppers for Taillem Bend.

9169 (MA2) Melbourne - Dry Creek goods:

- Fri.4.12: C509-S301-S313-700 through the parklands at 06 55.
- Thurs.10.12: BL32-C503-BL28 arrived before 06 30.

9170 (AM2) Dry Creek - Melbourne Yard goods:

- Sun.6.12: BL35-C507-BL34-61 wagons departed 16 00.
- Sun.13.12: C501-C507-S317-44 wagons through Mile End very early at 14 30.

Dry Creek Motive Power Centre (MPC):

- Sun.6.12: C507, C509, N463, S301, S307.
- Mon.7.12: C509, N470, S301.
- Sun.13.12: C501, C507, C510, N462, S307, S313, S317, X46.
- Sun.20.12: C501, C503, C506, C510, N465.

S CLASS AT BALLARAT: At 13 30 on Fri.11.12 S317 was sighted as second unit to C507 on an up goods at Ballarat. It was reported that the sound of the pair, particularly the S class, going up Warrenheip was spine tingling.

T413: This restored locomotive was sighted at Ballarat on Tues.15.12. It would appear the loco was booked for service and B examination.

BUSY DAY AT THE MARSH:

Thurs.26.11 saw two steam specials through Bacchus Marsh as well as the normal traffic. Train 8193, K153-17BE-38BE-25BE-7ABE-80BW-Werribee-64AW-82BW and train 8191, R707-R766-1BCE-67BW-68BW-32ABU-7BV-18BV-Pioneer-1AV-32AV-40ABU-60BW-63BW-61BW formed the two specials which carried a large number of kindergarten children.

Both trains originated at Sunshine and ran parallel to Deer Park; 8193 then preceded 8191 into Bacchus Marsh, arriving at 10 36. It shunted onto track 5 and took water whilst 8191 arrived at 10 49 and departed for Ballan at 11 01.

DRC40 arrived on the down at 11 03 and shunted to the dock after which K153 and its train docked then departed for Melton at 11 20. The DRC then departed on the up at 11 35.

Prior to K153's return from Melton at 12 25, BL29-X52 proceeded through with an up goods followed by A77 on an up pass. at 12 07. Whilst K153 was shunting cars and turning, A73, freshly painted after overhaul and repair to collision damage, towing G512, went through on the down to Bank Box Loop at 12 34.

BL32-C503 haul T401 up Warrenheip Bank on No.9150 Adelaide - Melbourne goods. 17 19, Tues.8.12.92. T401 was in Adelaide for evaluation by Australian National for possible use in and around Adelaide with the possibility of more units to follow, but at this stage it appears this will not happen. Hence T401's return back to Victoria *Ian Woollett*



OPERATIONS

A66 on an up Ballarat pass. arrived at 13 00 and was required to reverse and come forward into 2 track after which it departed at 13 11.

R766-R707 and their train arrived from Ballan at 13 10, shunted the cars to 2 track and took water in 5 and 6 tracks. During this time K153 docked and departed at about 13 40. Whilst the two R class were being turned A73-G512 went through on the up at 14 13 and were followed out by the steam special at 14 30.

DIMBOOLA PASS.: On Sat 21 11, the up Dimboola pass arrived at Spencer Street with G516 hauling N459-No.5 state car-Goulburn-D-D-N set.

STAWELL NEWS:

Our correspondent at Stawell has managed to find time to submit a list of sightings of the 20 00 (Sa) (9150) (7AM3) Dry Creek - Dynon goods which is due through through Stawell about 08 50 on Sunday morning. The goods runs reasonably close to time and the consist varies between 33 and 57 wagons with motive power usually triple-headed combinations of G, C, and BL class locos. Exceptions noted were:
Sun.5.7: X49-C510-C501-G531
Sun.9.8: C510-C502-C509-C507
Sun.29.11: BL32-S317-X50

NORTH WEST — Mildura

MILDURA NOTES:

- Pilot loco, Y108, which had been stationed at Mildura since 9 October 1991, was replaced by Y147 on Wed.18.11.
- Quality assurance testing of field, locomotive and work-station equipment for the implementation of ASW took place on the Ballarat - Mildura - Yelta and Ouyen - Pinnaroo lines on Sat.28.11. Test trains were scheduled between Ballarat and Donald and Mildura - Yelta - Donald.

A suitably equipped Hyrail vehicle, driven by an engineman, tested between Ouyen and Pinnaroo.

G530-H2 were used on the Mildura - Yelta section, with the locos reversing in order to enable the G to lead from Yelta to Donald.

- A special test train, checking lineside clearances, was run from Maryborough - Mildura on



G540 with clearance test train at Mildura on Wed.2.12.92.
(See item below.) Bruce McLean

Wed.2.12 and from Mildura - Merbein-Maryborough on Thurs.3.12.

The train consisted of G540-VEKX215 (empty) - VEKX212 with two containers, one being fitted with styrene foam shapes on the roof to establish clearance paths - VEKX218 (empty).

The trailing cab of G540 was fitted with a video camera, recorder and monitor and it is believed many trees and former locomotive water tanks fouled during the test.

The test was conducted prior to the introduction of a new superfreighter service, possibly incorporating the use of large gate-sided containers.

- A strike on Mon.14.12 caused the down pass., which arrived on Sat.12.12 with Z61-SJ283 (twinette sleeper) to be held over until Wed.16.12. On that day N468-Z57-SJ281-SJ284 arrived on the down pass., making the unusual situation of two car sets in Mildura. That night saw one of the longest passenger trains depart since the days of the 14 car trains on the Sunday nights in the 1970s. The up pass. consisted of N468-N452-D308-D352-ACZ257-BZS273-BRS226-D324-ACZ261-BZ266-BRS230-BZS275-SJ284-SJ281-SJ283-VMAP5-VMAP10-VMAP8 equalling 16/645 tonnes.

- Motive power during December was mainly G class with the occasional X class on goods workings. The pass. is always an N class and A, B, H, and T class locos were rarities.

NORTH — Echuca - Swan Hill

STEAM TO DENILQUIN:

The *Deniliquin Standard* reported that steam train trips to Deniliquin will continue. Five trips are planned, the first being in March. Each is estimated to be worth about \$40 000 to the local economy.

Mr P Pereira, liaison officer for R707 Operations, which operates the trains, said it was essential a turntable was placed in position in Deniliquin and the goods shed be dressed up to replace the railway station. He added this was necessary to obviate running the steam engine tender first from Echuca.

ECHUCA: The traffic pattern remains similar to that previously recorded. Details of individual movements during the first half of December are set out hereunder:

- 21 15 (9083) Melbourne Yard - Deniliquin goods:
- Wed.2.12: T379-VLCX-VZSX-VQCX departed 08 06.
- Thurs.3.12: X41-VLCX-7xVQCX departed 08 10.
- Fri.4.12: H4-VLCX-8xVQCX departed 08 00. A70 departed light engine at 12 43.

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Mon.7.12: T388-VLCX-6xVZSX-2xVZTX-8xVQCX departed 08 13.

Tues.8.12: H3-VLCX-2xVQCX departed 08 05.

Wed.9.12: X36-VLCXs departed 08 10.

Thurs.10.12: T392-VLCXs departed 08 10.

Fri.11.12: T400-VLCX-7xVQCX departed 08 00.

Wed.16.12: T392-VLCXs-6xVQCX departed 08 10.

11 30 (9084) Deniliquin - Melbourne Yard goods:

Wed.2.12: X31-T379-9xVZSX-5xVLCX-VOBX-2xVTQF-18xVQCX departed 16 18.

Thurs.3.12: X31-T374-VHGF-5xVLCX-VOCX-20xVQCX departed 16 05.

Fri.4.12: A70-3xVZSX-VLCX-5xVQCX arrived 15 32.

Mon.7.12: T388-VLCX-4xVQCX-H4 (dead) arrived 13 09. X44-T388-H4-5xVLCX-VOCX-24xVQCX departed 15 50.

Tues.8.12: H3-VLCX-9xVQCX arrived 11 53. X39-H3-5xVLCX-VOBX-27xVQCX departed 15 45.

Thurs.10.12: X39-T392-6xVZMF-4xVLCX-VOBX-2xVTQF-4xVHGF-15xVQCX.

Fri.11.12: X38-T400-2xVZMF-4xVLCX-VOFX-13xVQCX departed 15 35.

Wed.16.12: T392-VLCX-7xVQCX arrived 11 52. X40-T392-5xVLCX-VOFX-2xVTQF-23xVQCX departed 15 25.

06 00 (9067) Echuca - Moulamein goods:

Wed.2.12: X31-36xVHGF departed 06 15.

Fri.4.12: X31-27xVHGF departed 06 18.

Mon.7.12: X44-10xVHGF-10xVZSX departed 06 20.

10 30 (9068) Moulamein - Echuca goods:

Fri.4.12: X31-39xVHGF.

Tues.8.12: X44-23xVHGF arrived 13 40.

Tues.8.12: X39-21xVHGF arrived 13 44.

Tues.15.12: X39-19xVHGF arrived 12 30.

BENDIGO:

Loco Depot sightings:

Sun.1.11: A78, P21, S306, S310, S317, T360, T367, T372, T393, X32, Y138.

Sun.8.11: N458, P12, S306, S310, S317, T360, T367, T372, T393, T408, X33, X42, Y138.

Sun.15.11: A62, A77, S310, S317, T360, T367, T372, T393, T399, Y138.

Sun.22.11: A70, P19, S306, S310, S317, T367, T399, X31, X40, X43, X48, Y138.

Sun.29.11: N466, P16, S306, S310, T367, T392, X33, Y138.

Sun.6.12: A70, G534, P21, S306, S310, T367, T388, X41, X44, Y138.

Sun.13.12: G511, G528, N461, N473, P16, S310, T367, T374, T390, X39, Y138.

Sun.20.12: A78, G512, G516, P17, S301, S306, S310, T367, T369, X31, X35, Y138.

11 30 (9084) Deniliquin - Melbourne Yard goods: This train is scheduled to arrive at Bendigo at 17 50 and depart at 21 05. In the interim extra locomotives and loading are added causing some interesting combinations to be formed.

Mon.2.11: N459-X32

Wed.4.11: N454-X32-H1

Fri.6.11: X31-H2-H3-P23

Mon.9.11: X33-X42-T408

Tues.10.11: X31-S306-H2. (S306 had its number plates replaced)

Wed.11.11: N467-X33-T396.

Fri.13.11: X42-X44-X50-T396 (dead) -Y156 (dead) -43 wagons.

Mon.16.11: A62-X34-T399.

Tues.17.11: N466-X44-T382-T393 (dead) -T372 (dead) -T360 (dead). T393, T372 and T360 are being moved to AN South Australia after having been stored at Bendigo.

Thurs.26.11: X46-X45-X31-T392.

Fri.27.11: X35-T396-T399-P13.

Fri.4.12: A70-X31-X39-H3-P11.

Tues.8.12: X39-N471-H3-T392.

Wed.16.12: X40-T392-T374-T390.

Bridgewater traffic:

Fri.13.11: A62-Y138-14xVHGF (loaded) departed 11 10. Returned at 14 27 with 7xVHGF (empty). Y138 was used for shunting the

hoppers into the flour mill because of the weight restriction on the siding.

Tues.24.11: T399 departed light engine at 10 04, returning with 17xVHGF (empty) at 12 30.

Fri.27.11: T399-7xVHGF (loaded) departed 10 15. T399 returned light engine at 12 22.

Thurs.3.12: T379 departed light engine at 09 17, returned with 8xVHGF at 11 30.

Tues.8.12: T392-8xVHGF departed 09 40. T392 returned light engine at 12 43.

14 50 (TuTh) (9080) Swan Hill - Tottenham Yard goods:

Tues.3.11: X46-T400-T392 arrived 18 11.

Tues.10.11: X53-X45-43 wagons arrived 18 17.

Tues.17.11: X48-X47 arrived 18 21.

Tues.24.11: X38-X48 arrived 18 21.

Tues.1.12: N468-T382.

Thurs.3.12: X53-X50 arrived 18 21. N460 attached to the head.

Tues.22.12: G511-X48 arrived 19 07.

Thurs.24.12: G511-G516 arrived at 18 11 with grain and oil. X44-T382-oil wagons plus repairs ex-workshops attached. Departed 19 15.

Wed.30.12: G530-G536-X37-grain and oil arrived 18 20. X37 and oil detached and proceeded separately.

Other movements:

Fri.4.12: X54-X47-12xVHGF arrived off the Swan Hill line at 17 07 and departed for Maryborough at 20 10.

Fri.11.12: T396-6xVZMF (loaded) departed North at 09 21. Returned at 12 20 after discharging ballast.

Tues.15.12: G528-G511-38xVHGF arrived from Piangil at 18 39 and departed at 18 58.

Wed.16.12: G543-G533-X52-3xD-3xVLCX-4xOil-13xVHGF-VKKX-13xOil-VKKX-12xVHGF arrived from Swan Hill at 19 01. G543-G533-25xVHGF departed 19 50.

Thurs.17.12: G528-G511-X36-20xVHGF-D-2xOil-VOCX-8xoil-17xVHGF arrived from Swan Hill at 19 21.

OPERATIONS



N469-X39 power towards Tallarook with a long up Cobram pass. at 17 58, Sat.28.11.92. The extra cars and D vans were needed to transport bikers to Numurkah for the Great Victorian Bike Ride *Graham Withers*

Fri.18.12: G531-G514-20xVHGF arrived from Swan Hill at 18 45 and departed at 19 00.

Mon.21.12: G516-G512-24xVHGF arrived from Swan Hill at 17 15.

Wed.23.12: G531-G514-24xVHGF arrived from Swan Hill at 18 10.

Tues.29.12: G528-G541-44xVHGF arrived from Piangil at 18 46.

Wed.30.12: X39-12xVZMA (loaded) departed North at 09 27 followed by a ballast plough.

NORTH EAST – Albury - Cobram

BUSY DAY: On Sat.28.11 the Great Victorian Bike Ride commenced at Numurkah. Observations during the day at Mangalore recorded the following movements:

06 47: 8182-G517. Up sg goods.

07 24: X32-N475. First down bike special.

07 35: G518. *Melbourne Express*.

08 13: N453-N468. Second down bike special.

08 53: N462-A70-X52. Up Albury pass.

09 12: B61-N463. Third down bike special.

09 32: A66. Down Albury pass.

09 53: G519-8167. Up 'Phantom of the Opera' special.

10 30: N459. Up Cobram pass.

10 59: X39-N469. Down Cobram pass. with extra cars forming fourth bike special.

11 28: A81-N451. Fifth down bike special.

12 52: G517-8182. Down sg goods.

12 17: X34-N464. Sixth down bike special.

13 20: N475. First up empty cars ex-bike special.

15 03: N473-B61. Second up empty cars.

15 35: X32-N468-N453. Third up empty cars.

16 25: N451-A81. Fourth up empty cars.

17 17: G525-8166. Down sg goods.

17 30: N469-X39. Up Cobram pass. Includes fifth empty cars.

18 00: G522-8167: Down sg goods.

18 09: N464-X34. Sixth up empty cars.

18 23: A66. Up Albury pass.

19 11: N460. Down Albury pass.

19 40: N475. Down Cobram pass.

20 01: 8181. Down sg goods.

OVERPOWERED PASS.: On Thurs.17.12 the 05 40 (8302) up Seymour pass. consisted on A78-A66-A71-Z set-power van.

MANGALORE: Sightings and notes as follows:

- The 06 20 (8310) up Albury pass. continues to provide regular double-heading as it is used for loco balancing purposes. The usual combinations are N-X and A-X.

- Wed.16.12 saw T400 run two ballast trains, one on the Cobram line, the other on the Albury line.

- On Thurs.17.12 and Tues.22.12 the 17 40 (9354) Shepparton - Melbourne Yard goods was hauled by T371-H2-T408 and T382-T408-H2.

- During December, occasional block grain trains ran from Oaklands. Departure from Seymour was usually about 02 25 and the crew rested whilst the train was loaded. Departure from Oaklands was about 17 00, the 17 15 (8321) Albury pass. was crossed at Benalla and arrival at Seymour was between 21 00 and 21 30. The usual motive power for these trains has been double X class.

OPERATIONS

- During the rail strike on Mon.14.12 five late series X class locos were in Seymour yard as were a loaded and empty Oaklands block grain. X46-X47-X48 were rostered to take the up loaded grain and X51-X54 were to take the empty to Oaklands. Both trains were scheduled for early Tuesday morning departure.

STANDARD GAUGE

TRIPLE-HEADER: On Fri.18.12 8166-C504-G517 were sighted at 06 44 at Somerton Road crossing on an up goods.

MANGALORE: The feature of the month was the regular double-heading of the *Melbourne Express*, culminating in the combination C505-8175 on Sat.26.12. Other sightings were:

Wed.2.12: 8173-8167-C504. Down goods at 20 25.

Thurs.10.12: C504-8167-8171. Down goods at 19 49.

Wed.16.12: G518-sleeper-container flat on the down at 13 04, returning at 13 55.

Thurs.17.12: G520 up light engine at 07 57. G522-XPT power car on the down at 14 00. 8173-8171-8169 on a down goods at 18 29.

EAST — Bairnsdale

WARRAGUL NEWS: Timekeeping continues to be a problem on this line. PTC statistics indicate that it is the most difficult line on which to maintain time. Recorded instances are:

Fri.6.11: 18 23 (8431) down Bairnsdale pass. 11 late at Warragul.

Fri.13.11: 13 54 (4067) down Warragul pass. arrived 19 late.

Sat.28.11: 06 20 (8406) up Traralgon pass. departed Warragul 18 late.

Wed.16.12: 06 32 (4015) down Warragul pass. arrived 23 late.

Thurs.17.12: 16 58 (8423) down Traralgon pass. 23 late at Warragul.

METROPOLITAN

DANDENONG: Observations and news as follows:

Dandenong yard pilot:

Week commencing Mon.26.10: Y135

Mon.2.11: Y135

Mon.9.11: Y137

Mon.16.11: Y137

Mon.23.11: Y122

Mon.30.11: Y122

Mon.7.12: Y122

Mon.14.12: Y122:

11 28 (9538) Dandenong - Tottenham Yard goods:

Wed.2.12: T396-7 wagons

Mon.7.12: T382-4xVHAF-2xVOCX.

12 00 (9409) Spotswood - Aust.

Glass Co. siding goods.

Wed.16.12: T408-3 wagons.

12 05 (9427) Maribyrnong River Terminal - Traralgon goods:

Wed.2.12: X39-25 wagons.

STONY POINT PASS.:

■ T382: 3.12; 4.12; 8.12; 9.12

■ T390: 10.12; 11.12 (am)

■ B61: 11.12 (p.m.); 12.12; 14.12; 15.12

■ X44: 17.12

■ X40: 18.12; 19.12; 20.12:

ELTHAM FESTIVAL: On Sun.5.11 a special train operated from Flinders Street - Eltham, ran two shuttles to Heidelberg and then returned to Flinders Street. The train consisted of K153-67BW-68BW-63BW-7ABE-61BW-60BW-82BW. Movements ran close to time but unfortunately on

the second shuttle to Heidelberg, in the vicinity of Macleod, vandals threw paint on the tender of K153 and 82BW.

SUNSHINE TRAIN WATCHING:

The Friday night before Christmas often sees increased rail traffic.

Last year, Fri.18.12 was no exception with 42 country or outer metropolitan trains and 28 electrics sighted at Sunshine in the five hours between 16 30 and 21 30. Highlights were:

- DRC41-DRC43 went through three times.
- A70-PCJ-4xH cars twice.
- B61-4xH cars three times.
- T374 down light engine, returning later with a string of cement hoppers onto the Brooklyn goods line.
- There were three down standard gauge goods trains and three goods on the Western line. AN locos hauled two of these.
- X-T-T-40 wagons passed through on the down on the Bendigo line.
- The *Sydney Express* was a little over one hour late and the *Overland* about 25 minutes late.
- P-P-P-2xH sets-P were combined at Bacchus Marsh and returned to Melbourne with all locos working.
- A St Albans electric train became defective near the city during the evening, causing delays to several following services.

After a collision with a cow the previous night near Lindenow, N459 is inspected for damage, and broken hoses replaced at Bairnsdale before a return to service Mon.8.6.92 Jason Oliver



ROLLINGSTOCK

A monthly update of Locomotive and Rollingstock news

CARRIAGES

LH33: Was outshopped from Newport Workshops by Fri.23.10 following the removal of the Socimi air spring bogies.

N SETS: N3 was at Newport for overhaul as at Mon.12.10.

N12 (ACN36-BRN35-BN23) was outshopped from Newport Workshops following overhaul and repaint by Fri.11.9.

N19, which was lacquered with an experimental paint that has cracked badly, is still in service.

As Newport Workshops has been busy rebuilding BIH cars, the general maintenance of N sets has fallen behind.

Several ACN cars have been fitted with mobile payphones and a modified PA system, located at the Conductor's desk, that gives clearer announcements.

All N sets, with the exception of N8, operate off the automatic generating system.

S AND Z CARS: Configuration of S and Z sets as at Tues.20.10.

Z51: ACZ251-BS211-BS201 (HEP)

Z52: AZC252-BZ268-BRS228-BS219.

Z53: Not assembled.

Z54: ACZ254-BZS271-BRS221-BS214-BS126 (HEP)

Z55: Not assembled.

Z56: ACZ256-BZ267-BRS227-BS218-BS207.

Z57: ACZ257-BZ264-BRS229-BS210.

Z58: ACZ258-BZ270-BRS225-BZ269.

Z59: ACZ259-BS217-BS206 (HEP)

Z60: ACZ260-BZS273-BRS226 (HEP)

Z61: ACZ261-BZ266-BRS230-BS203 (HEP)

Z62: ACZ262-BZ265-BRS223-BZS273 (HEP)

Z63: ACZ263-BS209-BS208-BS212-BS215 (HEP)

Spare cars: ACZ253, BS202, BS205.

Under repair: BZS275, BS204.

Under overhaul: BRS223, BS213 at Ballarat.

Under conversion: BZS72, BZS274 at Newport.

ACZ252 was outshopped from Ballarat Workshops following overhaul and repaint, by Wed.9.9. This car was fitted with curtains but it retains the original double-glazed windows, which can be identified by the silver trim. Other ACZ cars have had the new sealed windows fitted as they pass through workshops. ACZ252 remains piped for HEP operation.

ACZ255 was returned from Ballarat Workshops, overhauled and repainted, by Thurs.22.10.

ACZ258 was sent to Newport Workshops for repair on Mon.14.9.

BS212 was outshopped, following overhaul and repaint at Ballarat Workshops, by Wed.9.9. This car operates off HEP for battery charging. It has been fitted with curtains replacing the vinyl blinds.

BRS225 was outshopped from Ballarat Workshops following overhaul, repaint and the fitment of curtains by Tues.15.9.

TRAILERS: MTH101 was outshopped from Ballarat Workshops, following overhaul and repaint into standard livery, by Mon.7.9.

CP VANS: CP294 was used to replace ACZ263 on Thurs.15.10. CP292 is under repair and CP291 and CP293 are out of use.

D VANS: The following D vans were not in regular service as at Tues.27.10.

D301: Stored, damaged, Melbourne Yard,

D304: Stored with experimental freight bogies at the pass. yard, Spencer Street.

D312: Stored, red carded, at the pass. yard, Spencer Street.

D320: In use on the Met overhead/greaser train.

D321: Stored, damaged, Melbourne Yard.

D325: Stored, awaiting repair, at the pass. yard, Spencer Street.

N454 waits at Avenel on the 12 00 down Albury pass. as X37 races through on the up Twin Cities Superfreighter from Bandiana. 13 35, Tues.6.10.92 *Gavin McLaughlan*



ROLLINGSTOCK

D329: In use on the Met overhead/greaser train.

PCJ492: This car was in service, after re-classification from PCO3, by Tues. 20.10. It remains in Maroon *Overland* livery but the *Overland* signs and V & ANR logos have been removed.

PCJ492: was repainted grey by Mon.23.11.

PCO4: Re-appeared in Victoria on Sat.24.10 because of a HEP failure on the *Overland*.

DYNAMOMETER CAR: Observed at Geelong Loco on Fri.23.10. It has recently been lifted and had repairs to the roof. Can some reader advise where this work was done?

ACZ CARS: ACZ257: Into Newport Workshops on Thurs.26.11. ACZ261: Has been fitted with a reflective block at window level in the centre of the car to enable staff to easily identify the car as a HEP unit.

BZS CARS: The last two ex-standard gauge cars were both in service on the broad gauge by Mon.16.11, following overhaul and internal refurbishment. BZS272-BZS274 were placed into set Z58 which was assembled as ACZ258-BZS272-BRS222-BZS274-BZS215 and was working on the Albury line.

BZS271: Operating as constructed and in original condition.

BZS273: Totally refurbished interior, including altered toilets and control panel. Fitted with new windows and curtains.

BZS275: As for BZS271.

BZS276: Internally refurbished when on the standard gauge. Still in the old layout with separate toilet/washroom at both ends although the centre partition has been removed. Retains the vinyl blinds and original control panel.

The seating capacity of BZS cars is 64 but it was originally planned to increase this to the standard BZ capacity of 68. The location of the original partition is easily identified by the gap between seats and the resultant extra leg room. All BZS cars operate off direct HEP supply.

FSH SET: FSH21 was outshopped from Newport Workshops by Fri.27.11.

HITACHI CARS: By November, over half the Hitachi fleet had been modified with end cab airconditioning and new cab windows, this work having been done at Newport Workshops.

- Set 70M-1965T-78M was internally refurbished at Bendigo and was back in service by Sun.18.10.

- Set 40M-19??T-11M had also returned from Bendigo by Mon.16.11 after refurbishment.

- Another set is to be assembled using former accident damaged cars 137M (re-numbered from 71M), 115M and a trailer car. These cars were at Bendigo Workshops on Fri.20.11.

- To date the following rollingstock has been scrapped: 27M, 90M, 219M,

85M and the original 137M has been withdrawn.

- The cars are beginning to show signs of severe vandalism that has occurred over the past five years and many have internal advertising panels covered over and internal panelling unrecognisable under layers of graffiti.

- The former D cars, now trailer cars 1991-2017 have had the driver's cab sealed off, either with the original glass, stainless steel or wood... one has been seen with a garbage bag covering a former driver's window.

- Car 1998T, which was out of use for some time, still retains the centre doorway.

— The — CLASSIFICATION YARD

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Photos wanted of Victorian electric trains - Tait, Harris, E & L classes, slides or b/w prints. Write: **Editor, IPL Books, P.O. Box 10-215, Wellington, New Zealand.**

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Charges: Normal rate \$2 per line per month. Special rate for ARHS members \$1 per line per month. Minimum charge for all advertisements is 4 lines per month.

A cluster of locos at the Dynon broad gauge turntable. Left to right: Y115, H2, Y135, Y156, Y163, X34 and A85. Sun.18.10.92 Mark Cauchi



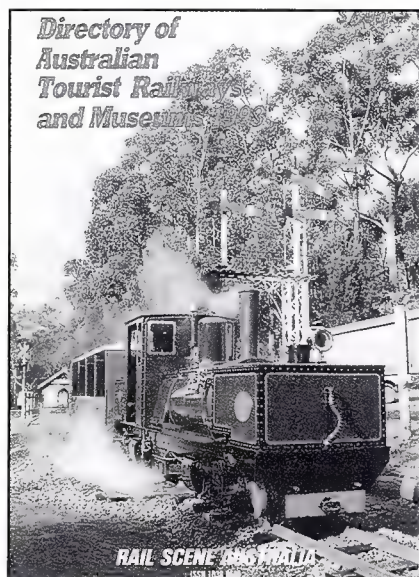
TAILDISC

Reviews, amendments, queries, bits and pieces and the odd spot

REVIEW

Directory of Australian Tourist Railways and Museums. 1993 edition. Review by W Doubleday.

An update of the 1989 directory has been published by the ARHS NSW Division and the Light Railway Research Society of Australia. The 64 page A4 size work is published in a magazine style and is actually called a magazine, under the title *Rail Scene Australia*. It describes itself as a magazine published at infrequent intervals, available at hobby shops, newsagents, railfan outlets and direct from the publisher, but not available on subscription.



The directory provides a listing of the various tourist railways, museums and electric tramways in each state, broken up into various geographical regions. For each state and region there is a short introduction of the area and a brief description of the railway history and current operations.

The layout is good, although the A4 size is questionable from the viewpoint of a traveller. It is not pocket size and thus easily damaged. It is printed on glossy paper with black and white photos, colour photos, an index and letterhead symbols of the various organisations.

Reliant on information provided by each operator, the directory sets out to provide a brief background, directions on how to get there by private and public transport, a summary of feature

exhibits and information on opening hours/operating timetables and contracts. Unfortunately for each listing, it is not necessarily complete or accurate; for example, a number of errors in the Victorian section were detected from a quick reading. The entries for the other states may have similar errors, but the reviewer is not as familiar with them. For Victoria, the ones noted were:

- Yarra Valley Railway listing inaccurate in many ways.
- A very incomplete listing for the Seymour Loco Group and one indicating that it is a branch of the ARHS Vic. Division.
- No listing for R707 Operations, though R707 is listed as an operational locomotive under the Steam-rail fleet restored by the Plan R Group.
- No listing for the Great Southern Railway Group at Nyora.
- The listing for the TMSV at Bylands says that grip car No.593 is a former Melbourne cable tramway car. It was only built in the mid 1980s and given the number of the next grip car. (Refer *Trolley Wire* No.229, May 1987.) It has operated in Melbourne though on a couple of occasions, but certainly not hauled by a cable. In the 1989 edition it was correctly shown as a replica.

This shows the problem of being reliant on each group to provide correct information, editing the information provided correctly, or the editors knowing of each new group as it is formed. It is not easy keeping up. There are also a couple of printing errors, such as the photo of Puffing Billy's 8A crossing the trestle bridge, printed back to front and Bellarine Peninsula Railway's V1209 leaving Lakers Siding shown as 'A Hotham Valley Tourist Railway V-class 2-8-2 with a train of ex TGR stock'.

However, while it is easy to be critical, the amount of work to put such a directory together is immense. At \$7.95 the publication is still worth having for the information of what is currently happening interstate is often hard to get. I would recommend that the editors put in the next issue a bigger disclaimer covering the information and not just the fares. I also ask that the various organisations ensure

that their information is correct and that they have the means of checking the information prior to publication.

ECHUCA LOCO SHED

Members of the Echuca Rich River Development Society, the owners of the old engine shed are asking for suggestions as to how the shed can be put to use.

The shed is in urgent need of repair but is in danger of being demolished for the value of its old bricks. Suggestions can be forwarded to NEWSRAIL who will pass them on to the society.

ODD SPOT

The joys of being an editor!

Getting this magazine out is no picnic.

If I print jokes, people say I am silly.

If I don't, they say I am too serious.

If I print news from other states, I am asked what is the relevance.

If I don't, I am parochial.

If I don't print contributions, I don't appreciate true genius.

If I do, the magazine is full of junk.

If I print each sighting, I am filling the magazine with repetitious nonsense.

If I don't, I am ignoring history.

If I make a change in another's writing, I am too critical.

If I don't, I am asleep.

Now, likely as not, someone will say I pinched this from some other publication.

I did!

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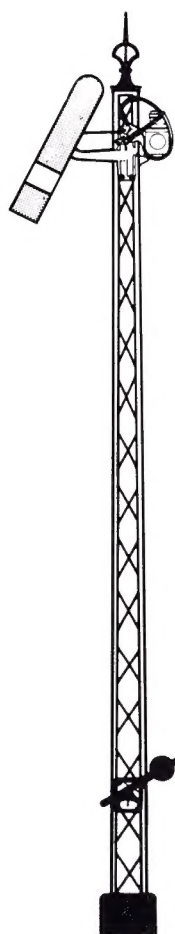
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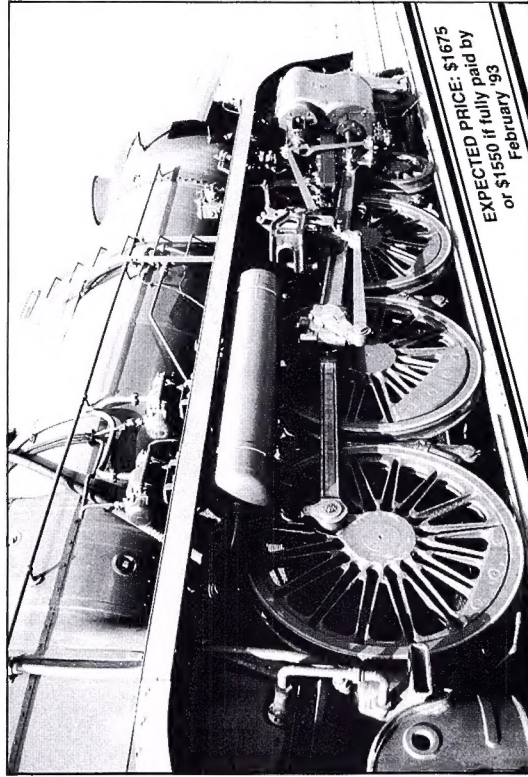


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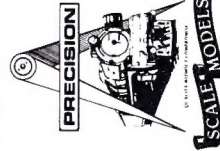
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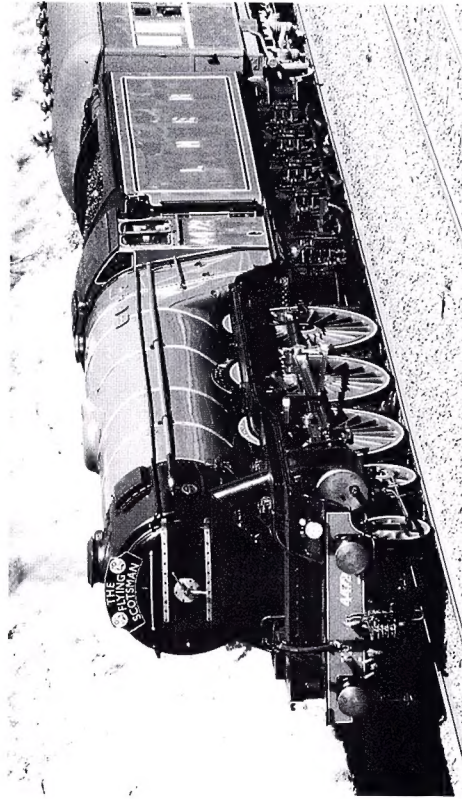
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